

San Diego DX Club Bulletin

September 2015



SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

**Ham Radio from McMurdo Station and Yesterday
Camp, Antarctica**

MEETING NOTICE:

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

**JOIN US AT THE SIZZLER, 3755 Murphy Canyon Road,
San Diego, CA 92123 (858) 278-6988**

SOCIAL HOUR, 5:00 P.M. DINNER, 5:30 P.M.

MEETING, 6:30 P.M

A Word from the Prez

2

VP Report

3

Secretary/Treasurer Rpt

4

CA QSO Party Results

5

From the Editor

6

September Program

10



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A Word from the Prez . . .

John Vissat, NA6L



ARRL HQ and when is a "U" not a "U" ?

As some of you know, my wife Denise (KJ6 Japan Air Lines) often travels for business reasons and I rarely accompany her, but when she mentioned that she was going to CT she cut right through the QRM and got all of my attention. My next question was "where in CT" (not that it is a big state) and she replied that she "flew into Hartford and would be working in New Haven" --- bingo, Newington (location of the ARRL HQ) is between those cities. A plan was quickly hatched and with the help of Dick Norton, N6AA our SW ARRL Director we scheduled some meetings starting with Dave Patton, N1NN who is the head of Radio Sport and off I went. Because SDDXC is discussing a scholarship program I was also able to setup a meeting with Lauren Clarke, KB1YDD who is in charge of contributions, scholarships, grants and more.

On the morning after our arrival in New Haven, I saw my wife Denise off to her job and I headed up the highway to Newington for my ARRL HQ visit (what a concept, she goes to work and I go to play).

My day started by taking the public tour of the ARRL HQ various areas and departments -- this is a huge facility. After seeing the ARRL lab pictured in so many issues of QST it was interesting to see it in person and yes, it looks just like it does in the pictures. If you love amateur radio like we all do you may get a sore neck while you twist around to see everything that they have on display. There are original radios from the Maxim era and displays of typical stations decade by decade as well as large collections of rare and historic radios. One of my favorite items was the OSCAR satellite, just one of three originals, with one having burned up in the atmosphere and the third in the Smithsonian. The ARRL receives so many offers of donated gear that they have to say "No" except for the most exceptional pieces --- MHz Pat are your reading this? In reality they have a huge secure area filled with exceptionally rare radios, way too many to display. I even had a chance to operate the W1AW station. Although I was hoping to work some DX all I worked was one operator in MA on 17 meters. The good news was that the person I did contact had not been on the air for ages and I was his first contact -- how perfect, get back on the air and have W1AW be your first QSO?

After my public tour I met with Dave Patton and got go to do a bit more exploring. Oddly enough one of the highlights of exploring the ARRL HQ was meeting the woman who sorts all of the outgoing BURO cards, she is like a one person sorting machine, no more than 3 seconds a card.

A Word from the Prez (cont'd) . .

When I asked her what her biggest challenge was she replied "trying to figure out if the letter is a "U" or a "V", tell everyone to make the "U" with a flat bottom and my life will be better". Good stuff.

To shorten the story: If you've never gone to the ARRL HQ it really is a must-do and if it has been a long time since your last visit, try to go again. Not far from the same area are the following: New England Wireless and Steam Museum, The Vintage Radio and Communications Museum and even the Marconi stations sites are in driving range.

See all of you at the meeting Wednesday, September 23.

Regards,

John, **NA6L**

Vice President Report

Howard, W6HDG

I'm pleased to report that we will have a presentation on the Navassa DXpedition at our October 28, 2015 Club Meeting. John Miller, K6MM will be our special guest. John was an operator on Navassa and has lots of stories to tell us. He is flying down from San Jose on October 28th and getting an exclusive tour of the NA6L shack before being driven by John V personally to the meeting!

Many of you know K6MM. John is Past-President of the Northern California Contest Club, Founding Member of the CW Operators' Club (CWops #11), Board Member of the Northern California DX Foundation and Co-chair for the 2011, 2013 and 2015 International DX Conventions in Visalia. John has been a member of many important DXpedition teams in the past including the Wake Island DXpedition (in fact John will be the Banquet Speaker at this year's Pacificon next month speaking on the Wake DXpedition).

Please put the word out about this talk to your ham friends. I'd like to use this meeting as a recruiting tool for some new club members!

Switching gears entirely.....Please put the Annual Holiday Party, December 6 from Noon-3PM on your calendar. This will once again be held at Fiddlers Green Restaurant on Shelter Island. If you attended last year, you know that the food was great and they treated us really well. We will once again have exclusive use of the entire restaurant for the members of our club: Quality food, PA system, great acoustics (one of the few restaurants where you can talk comfortably in a normal voice), plenty of free parking and, of course, a gift and prize drawing! We already have terrific prizes donated by Heil Sound, DX Engineering and HRO! You won't want to miss this event!

See you Wednesday at the Sizzler.

Howard, W6HDG

Secretary/Treasurer Reports

Ellen, N6UWW



San Diego DX Club September 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM by John, NA6L, at the Sizzler Restaurant. He thanked Jim, W6YI, for hosting the Summer Bash and all those that helped pull it off. There were over 80 people in attendance and nobody went home hungry!

Visitors

Bob Sparks - KA7IGN, Steve Tripp - AI6CX

Old Business

Gayle, K6GO, reviewed the history of the Scholarship Committee which was formed within the Club a few years ago. She encouraged personal endowments or scholarships from the Club as a whole, with the possibility of specific criteria (i.e. minimum GPA, community service, at risk individuals).

Mike, NA6MB, mentioned that the City of Poway's Antenna Ordinance is scheduled to be reviewed (yes, it's already been a year!) at the upcoming City Council meeting.

Jim, W6YI, thanked everybody for their help making the Summer Bash such a success.

New Business

It's not too early to start thinking about Visalia. Our Club is responsible for staffing the Registration Desk and a sign-up sheet was circulated to fill volunteer slots. John, K6AM, will be the Master of Ceremonies again.

Please remember to put December 6 (lunch) on your calendar for the annual Holiday Party. SDDXC Vice-President Howard, W6HDG, has already begun collecting door prizes.

A Roundtable discussion followed the Business Meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Statement Balance 8/31/2015 \$7039.30

Check # 525 \$86.18 (200# ice for Summer Bash)

Ellen, N6UWW

The Top 10 ate too much at the summer bash and is taking the month off. But CQP is right around the corner so here's last year's results for inspiration.

SDDXC RESULTS 2014 CALIFORNIA QSO PARTY

CLASS	CALL	SCORE	CW QSO'S	SSB QSO'S	TOT QSO'S	MLTS	FINISH
SO HP	N5ZO/6	263,452	1,345	334	1,679	56	1st place SD County SOHP Wine winner
SO LP	K6AM	242,364	943	711	1,654	57	1st place SD County SOLP 3rd place CA SOLP Wine winner
SO LP	WN6K	179,272	1,086	0	1,086	55	1st place SD County SOLP CW
M/S E	K6QK *	331,180	1,049	1,281	2,330	58	1st place CA M/S 1st place CA M/S EXP New Imperial Co M/S record New M/S expedition record
M/S	NX6T *	259,122	914	902	1,816	57	1st place SD County M/S 3 nd place CA M/S

* NX6T ops = AF6WF, K6KAL, WB6NBU, N6CY, K6GO, NA6MB, W2PWS, K4RB, N6KI

* K6QK ops = K6ZH, N7CW, NN6X, N7TY, N6ERD, N6EEG

The rivalry between the K6QK memorial team and The San Diego Contest Club, NX6T was settled at least for this year. The K6QK gang at the castle on I-8 in Imperial county outdid themselves by about 40K over last year to set a new record! Great job guys.

The 2015 50th anniversary running of the CQP is slated for 1600 UTC Oct 3 to 2200 UTC Oct 4. This year there will be 24 1x1 special calls, three each ending in the eight letters in the word "G O L D R U S H". For example, N6D and W6R will be on in San Diego. Go to cqpc.org for details on the GOLDRUSH contest along with rules, county abbreviations and all the other details. Last year's top scorers from our club are already putting the finishing touches on their plans for 2015.

John, K6AM

From the Editor

Bob, K9RHY

BY1QH 20 Years Later



The arrival of our freshly-renewed passports last week inspired me to recollect and write about a trip my XYL and I took almost exactly 20 years ago during a different era. Our December 1995 Asia itinerary included Hong Kong, Tokyo, Macau and China (Beijing and surrounding area) , with one of the highlight being an opportunity to visit and operate from BY1QH in Beijing and another being the opportunity to meet and interact with (lots of) typical Chinese hams. We were also delighted to participate in the first Beijing International DX Convention and the BT1X operation, the first operation ever from the Great Wall.



Ham radio has come a very long way in China since our first visit. In 1995, there were no more than a handful of Chinese hams. Now (according to whose statistics you choose to quote) there are well over 1,000. In 1995, virtually all ham activity was from Beijing. Today, Chinese ham activity takes place from virtually every corner of the vast country.

At the time of my first visit, there were no Chinese ham radio equipment manufacturers. Today, there are more than 50. As I write this, I am "reading the mail" on a local 440 MHz QSO using my Baofeng dual band HT. This would have been unheard of in 1995.

I had my first QSO with China almost immediately following the relaxation of restrictions on ham communications between US and Chinese hams in the early 1980's. My first QSO with BY1QH (operator Yuan Bo) was in 1984 and I have had many enjoyable QSO's since then.

The 1995 visit was my first opportunity to visit and operate from China and BY1QH. Since then I've had the opportunity to visit a number of other memorable Chinese cities including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Wuhan, Shenyang, and Hangzhou.

BY1QH is the call assigned to the Tsing Hua University club station. Tsing Hua University (the Chinese name is Qing Hua - hence the QH suffix) is among the most prominent engineering universities in China. With almost 20,000 students, the campus was constantly active during my entire visit.

Much of the engineering work for the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River had been performed at Tsing Hua. When we arrived, construction of the dam had just barely begun. Construction was completed in 2006.

Beijing, particularly in December, is not a hot tourist stop. Business people involved in joint ventures with the Chinese government represented virtually all of the westerners we encountered on this trip. Flying from Hong Kong to Beijing in 1995 was an experience completely different from the same trip today.

For the 1995 trip, we booked a flight on Dragon Air since they code share with United. We weren't sure what to expect, but were very pleasantly surprised. Dragon Air is co-operated by Cathay Airlines, flies a fleet of new Airbus 320's, and has service that rivals Singapore Airlines. The other option from Hong Kong at the time was via China Air, a domestic airline.

Beijing is three air hours due north of Hong Kong, but visiting Hong Kong in December does little to prepare you for the change. The temperature was much colder at 5 degrees C (41 degrees F) against 22 degrees C (72 degrees F), the sun set earlier (about 4:30 PM versus 6:00 PM local time in December), but there were much more profound differences.

Since our flight originated in Hong Kong, we arrived at the Beijing domestic terminal. Now, if you have visited Beijing, and arrived at the new international terminal built in anticipation of the Olympics, let me assure you there are few similarities. The new Beijing Airport (PEK) is almost in another world.

In 1995, if Indiana Jones landed at the Beijing domestic terminal in his 1930's DC-3, he would feel right at home. Arrival and departure schedules were hand written on a chalk board. And why not? Although Beijing is a city of 13 million, when we arrived before Christmas in 1995, there were only five flights posted. The terminal was dark, with most of the lights (bare neon tubes) disconnected. The color scheme was an institutional pastel green. There are unhappy-looking soldiers in ill-fitting green uniforms everywhere. The soldiers appeared unhappy at first glance, but if you smiled at them they beamed back at you. We were given a stack of paperwork to fill out on the plane in anticipation of arrival (customs forms, medical forms, arrival/departure forms, etc.).

With the exception of the arrival/departure card, none of the paperwork was collected, looked at, or asked for when we arrived or when we left.

The airport experience today is completely up to world standards. Huge changes were made in conjunction with the 2008 Summer Olympics that definitely allowed Beijing to join 21st century air travel.

Our first impression of Beijing at night was one of almost pitch darkness. Even at the airport there were virtually no lights. Not a single flight took off or landed for the hour it took us to retrieve our luggage, go through immigration and customs (a wave) and get a cab to the hotel, even though we were there at the rush hour between 5:45 and 6:45 PM. In 1995, it was immediately obvious that Beijing was not a prosperous city. With the exception of the biggest hotels, there were virtually no lights. No street lights, no lights on commercial buildings and very little light from the many high rise apartment buildings.

Particularly evident in the early morning was a thick, coal smoke haze. 80% of the heat in Beijing and 60% of the cooking was done with coal or charcoal. The coal arrives every afternoon in mile after mile of bumper-to-bumper, smoky trucks on the main road from the north then further distributed via bicycle. The results are obvious. As an aside, we learned that the “mayor” of Beijing banned all cooking in the city for a week before the visit of the Olympic Selection Committee to make the air look less polluted. Lots of grumbling over instant noodles (Ugh!), but the air was clear.

Every time I come home from a visit to Beijing my XYL asks me if the air quality has improved. As of my latest visit, the answer continues to be an emphatic “NO”.

China is still emerging from a subsistence-level economy for most Chinese and there are few resources available for hamming. BY1PK operates the only 2 meter repeater in China. During the evening (if you understand Mandarin) you can hear a half dozen BG stations discussing their most recent evening meal.

Ham radio has come a long way in China. From 1949 to 1958, there was no ham radio at all. A Bulgarian CW contest team activated the first post-war Chinese station on November 3, 1958 - BY1PK. This station was limited to contacting Eastern European Communist-block countries on CW. Notably, JA1ZZ was once copied as JT1ZZ and given a signal report. When the call was corrected, the QSO was immediately terminated!

No QSL, either.

During the Cultural Revolution, which started in 1966, all ham radio activity was again terminated. During the 1970's, as China entered an era of reform, the door to ham operation re-opened a crack. As a result, BY1PK went back on the air in March, 1982. In 1995, there were 108 club stations in China. The first private stations were licensed in 1992. During my 1995 visit there were approximately 1,000 class 3 license holders (“BG” call signs) who could theoretically put a station on the air.

By the way, there are 16 different and distinct varieties of Chinese cooking. And there are 65 officially recognized “minority” groups. Our 1995 eating experiences were fantastic (and have gotten even better during every subsequent visit), including a Peking Duck feast (\$11 for three people) and a traditional Chinese banquet for six people at a total cost of \$9. Unless you're particularly adventuresome, pass on the sea cucumber. Everything else was great. Even today, if you go to a restaurant unescorted by a Chinese host, be prepared to guide your waiter around the restaurant pointing at other diner's meals to indicate what you would like. Virtually no one in Beijing speaks a word of English.

In 1995, when taking a cab, someone in the hotel had to write your destination down in Chinese characters. You needed to carry a card with your hotel's name and address so you could tell the cab driver how to get you back.

Our personal tour guide was Gray, one of the operators at BY1QH. It was an incredible experience touring Beijing with a native and a ham to boot. Unforgettable! At the time, Gray was a 5th year engineering student, specializing in fiber optics. His English was perfect, although he had never traveled outside China.

All the other BY1QH ops were fluent in English. Sean represents the University in English language competitions and was anxious to fine tune his language skills with Americans.

Mike, Harry and Alma are also fluent in English. Mike is a big basketball fan and was especially a fan of Michael Jordan.

The station at BY1QH is on the fourth floor (walk up, of course) of a dormitory building on the university campus.



The shack looked like it could use a good scrubbing, but, hey, this is a college dorm! Three of the operators of BY1QH (Gray, Harry and Mike) shared the room adjacent to the shack. The other operators, Sean (BG1LUV / BZ1LUV - President of the University Ham Club) and Alma (YL) had different accommodations.

The BY1QH station featured an FT-767GX and GLA-1000 and Dentron amplifiers. Both amps were out of commission when I arrived. I carried new tubes for the GLA-1000 in my carry-on baggage, but the new tubes weren't enough to fix the amp's problems. The Dentron was a basket case.

Antennas include a 4-element triband yagi on the roof (although the 10 foot supporting tower leans over because of a past bout it lost with the wind), a quad for 10 and 15; and dipoles for 40, 80 and 160. I also carried nuts, bolts and tools to repair the tower and rotator. Non-metric hardware is impossible to find in Beijing.

The noise level was terrific, always at S7 or better on all bands. The best signals are from the US West coast in the early morning and evening on 40 meters. The rest of the US is a very difficult path from China. JA and Russians are on all bands, when they are open. Both 20 and 40 were productive.

We shopped in the Chinese markets and the "malls" (actually department stores). The best outdoor shopping is near the US embassy. Prices at tourist shops are 2 -3 times higher than at the markets for the same products. Most prices are negotiable, even if you don't speak a word of Chinese. Some paper and a pen can help because written numbers are enough to do a deal.

The BY1QH ops asked me to pass along the following hints: Don't mail them packages. Anything you might send is subject to high duties which they simply can't afford. The only way to take in gear, tubes, etc. is via personal visits. The duty on the amp tubes I carried in would have been equivalent to a year's salary for an average Chinese ham. Also, don't send green stamps or use fancy postage stamps (although recent experience shows that this is changing. China is moving to a uniform-size system, so US (and European sized envelopes don't fit into the program). I find the best way to get a direct QSL from China is by sending a green stamp and an address sticker that can be affixed to one of their standard-sized envelope.)

All mail addressed to BY1QH passes through a University administrative office before it gets to the club. Anything of value (green stamps included) is removed. Fancy stamps are cut off envelopes. IRC's, however, make the trip OK as the administrators don't see any value to them. I carried back dozens of direct QSL cards in their SAE's (even the stamps on SASE's are removed!) and posted them upon my return to the USA. After two dozen trips to China over the past 20 years, I am comfortable in saying that the changes that have taken place are profound. Perhaps the most visible is that new office, retail and residential high rise buildings are being opened almost daily (but to add a note, many are unoccupied because it appears that the motivation behind their construction was to demonstrate economic growth – which has now slowed dramatically).

The other profound (and highly visible change over the past 20 years) is the increase in traffic and the number of cars on the road. Traffic used to all bicycles. Today many of those bicycles have been replaced by cars.

I expect to see the pace of development continue on my next visit. One thing that probably won't change dramatically is the wide gulf between us socially (but that's another story). I would be delighted for a team of BY hams to mount a major expedition to P5 but that does not appear to be in the cards.

Keep listening.

73,

Bob, K9RHY

September Program: Ham Radio from McMurdo Station and Yesterday Camp, Antarctica

Ron Flick, K6REF, spent almost five weeks in Antarctica in Nov-Dec 2014, including McMurdo Station (KC4USV, Ross Island Grid Square RB32), and three weeks on the Ross Ice Shelf at Yesterday Camp near 80°S, 180°W (Grid Square AB01). He logged about 430 contacts from KC4USV, and 125 as KC4/K6REF from Yesterday Camp using a 20-m dipole strung 8 ft off the ice on flag sticks ubiquitous in Antarctic deep field camps, and his FT847 powered by a 12V go-cart battery.

The purpose of the trip was to install 16 seismometer stations measuring the mechanical properties of the Ross Ice Shelf, which holds back glaciers moving toward the ocean from West Antarctica, thus slowing global sea level rise. Ham radio was part of the public outreach for the National Science Foundation sponsored research project



Ron earned a PhD in Oceanography from Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California San Diego after obtaining his BS in Physics from Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City. He is the Staff Oceanographer for the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways, and a Research Associate at Scripps.

He has spent 46 years studying nearshore processes including tidal flow-induced electric potentials, waves, surfzone turbulence, tides, sea level, and beach and cliff erosion in a career of academic research and administration, program management, public service, and consulting comprising theoretical, laboratory, sea-going, and field efforts, including deep-field camp on the Ross Ice Shelf, Antarctica. He has authored or co-authored over 70 scientific works including several book chapters, and the 1997 World Book Encyclopedia entry on Tides.

He has served as an expert witness in dozens of court cases involving sea level, waves, currents, tides, and coastal erosion. These include two murder cases, and a few tidal boundary disputes, one being United States versus Alaska in the United States Supreme Court.

Flick is a certified SCUBA diver and sailing instructor, holds a US Coast Guard 100-ton Masters Credential, and amateur radio license K6REF. He enjoys volunteer sail crew at the Maritime Museum San Diego, and sailing with his wife Myra and friends on their 49' ketch Friendship.